

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 766
By Shepard

A RESOLUTION to recognize the many contributions of Robert T. Spicer on the occasion of the observance of the bicentennial celebration of the founding of Dickson County.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are particularly pleased to celebrate milestones in the histories of the counties of this state and to specially recognize the significant contributions of leading citizens of such counties and their communities to their growth and development; and

WHEREAS, one such progressive community is Dickson County, which has been celebrating its bicentennial, and one such outstanding citizen is the late Robert T. Spicer; and

WHEREAS, a master traditional artist, Robert Spicer was the youngest of nine children born to Robert T. and Minnie Lee Henderson Spicer II. He began his lifetime pursuit of flatfoot or buck dancing at the tender age of seven after witnessing an African American man dancing in the bed of a wagon; and

WHEREAS, flatfoot dancing combines the elements of certain African styles of dance and articulated Celtic foot-stepping, resulting in an improvised solo dance, characterized by fast percussive footwork that stays close to the floor and often duplicates the rhythm of the accompanying instruments; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Spicer soon perfected his style of flatfoot dancing and devoted the entirety of his life to sharing his artistry with his fellow citizens, teaching in the old-fashioned way, clapping his hands or playing spoons to accompany his dancers; and

WHEREAS, a farmer and school bus driver for the Dickson County Board of Education, Robert Spicer supplemented his income by working as a professional dance caller and dance organizer at musical clubs throughout Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, Mr. Robert T. Spicer received the National Heritage Fellowship given by the National Endowment for the Arts at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and he was awarded the 3rd Judge William D. "Bill" Field Heritage Award by the Chamber of Commerce's Tourism Council in 2000; and

WHEREAS, Robert Spicer enjoyed the love and companionship of his wife, Virginia Billingsley Spicer; together, they were the proud parents of Marie Spicer, Judy McEwen, and Diane Franklin; and

WHEREAS, a local and national treasure, Robert Spicer led the way in preserving the earliest dance styles of Tennessee's black and white settlers, and this General Assembly finds it appropriate to recognize his significant contributions to his fellow citizens, state, and country; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we join with the citizens of Dickson County in celebrating their bicentennial and in specially honoring the many laudable contributions of Robert T. Spicer to the growth and prosperity of Dickson County and to the admirable quality of life enjoyed by its citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to the family members of Mr. Spicer with this final clause omitted from such copy.